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# **Prejudicial Attitudes toward Homosexuals as a Function of Religious Orientation**

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## **Abstract**

**This study investigated prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuals as a function of individuals' religious affiliation and orientation. It was predicted that intrinsically oriented individuals would be more prejudiced toward homosexuals than would extrinsically oriented individuals. This trend was expected more for Catholics than for Protestants. Students answered several questionnaires about their attitudes toward homosexuals and their religious beliefs. Although intrinsically oriented individuals were more prejudiced toward homosexuals than were extrinsically oriented individuals, this trend was stronger for Protestants than for Catholics. Understanding how prejudicial attitudes against homosexuals are formed may help to eliminate discrimination toward this group.**

## **Prejudicial Attitudes toward Homosexuals as a Function of Religious Orientation**

How can we know that the morals and values we teach our children today will mold their character and influence their behavior tomorrow? One of the ways to nurture a person's values and beliefs is through religious teaching. Most religious doctrines convey messages of love and forgiveness, acceptance and tolerance (Melton, 1991). Yet there is an alarming amount of discrepancy between these values and the reactions people have toward various social groups

such as gays and lesbians (Beran, Claybaker, Dillon, & Haverkamp, 1992; Herek, 2000; Schellenberg, Hirt, & Sears, 1999; Weinberg, 1972).

There are obvious inconsistencies between the religious morals and values people are taught and the ways in which people actually behave in the world (Allen & Spilka, 1967; Allport, 1966). Social psychologists know that the attitudes people acquire toward different social groups are formed in different ways (Anderson, 1981; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Religious values and beliefs are a part of these attitudes. Differences in the acquisition of these religious values and beliefs may contribute to the array of attitudes toward various social groups.

An important component of religious acquisition is religious orientation. Religious orientation is correlated with attitudes toward different social groups (Fisher, Derison, Polley, Cadman, & Johnston, 1994; Fulton, Gorsuch, & Maynard, 1999; Herek, 1987; McFarland, 1989; Morris, Hood, & Watson, 1989). Understanding religiosity may help explain how religious beliefs are related to prejudicial attitudes toward social groups such as gays and lesbians.

Gordon W. Allport (1966) defined religiosity in two ways. To Allport, individuals could either be intrinsically or extrinsically oriented to their religion. Allport suggested that people who possess an intrinsic orientation to religion "live their religion as an end in itself." Intrinsically religious people consider their religion to be what inspires their everyday decisions and actions. Their religious beliefs are what influence and propel their behavior. This kind of faith is above selfish needs and desires. Often individuals with an intrinsic orientation sacrifice their own desires in order to stay committed to their religious beliefs. Intrinsically oriented people consider faith to be "a supreme value in its own right. It is oriented toward a unification of being, takes seriously the commandment

of brotherhood, and strives to transcend all self-centered needs” (Allport, 1966, p. 455). Allport believes that for intrinsically oriented individuals, the importance of religion has become functionally autonomous; what drives the individual to participate in a religious way has become separate or independent from other desires.

Allport believed that extrinsically religious individuals “use their religion as a means to an end.” These people see their religious affiliation as a way to meet others, to form social groups, and to achieve various other goals. According to Allport, individuals with an extrinsic orientation toward religion feel no obligation to attend church. Their connections to the church are out of a sense of personal gain or an urgency to fulfill some external need not related to their religion. Compared to intrinsically oriented individuals, extrinsically oriented individuals are more likely to attend church in order to look good in the community or to improve their life by presenting a positive social image.

Allport thought of religiosity as a continuum from consistently extrinsic to consistently intrinsic. Allport did, however, come across individuals who did not fit these two orientations. Allport found individuals who agreed with both intrinsic and extrinsic items as well as individuals who disagreed with both intrinsic and extrinsic items. Allport referred to those individuals who agreed with both intrinsic and extrinsic items as indiscriminately proreligious. Allport referred to those individuals who disagreed with both intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics as indiscriminately antireligious.

Following Allport’s extrinsic and intrinsic religious orientation theory, Allen and Spilka (1967) proposed the committed and consensual religious theory. According to Allen and Spilka, committed and consensual religious orientations consist of five cognitive components: content, clarity, complexity, flexibility, and importance. The content component refers to “the way in

which the individual conceptualizes the topic area” (Allen & Spilka, 1967, p. 199). The content of a committed religious orientation is one of abstract thinking and ideologies whereas the content of consensual religiosity is more literal and specific. Clarity refers to the accuracy of the individual’s beliefs. People with a committed religious orientation have a clearer understanding of religious concepts than those with a consensual orientation. Complexity refers to “the number of categories, elements, or aspects of religiosity which the individual uses” (Allen & Spilka, 1967, p. 199). A committed religious orientation is far more complex than is consensual religiosity. There are a larger number of categories in the religious ideas of a committed orientation than of a consensual orientation. Flexibility refers to how malleable an individual’s beliefs are when compared to others. The flexibility component of committed religiosity is more tolerant of differing religious opinions and beliefs than is consensual orientation, which Allen and Spilka propose is relatively closed-minded. Importance refers to the value and centrality an individual’s religious beliefs hold in that individual’s everyday life. People with a committed religious orientation typically place more value in religious beliefs than persons with a consensual religious orientation.

Allen and Spilka attempted to define religiosity more precisely than did Allport. Allport believed that religiosity was a continuum of extrinsic versus intrinsic orientation. Allen and Spilka believed that in order to understand how people differ in expressing their religious beliefs, one must first understand the way in which individual beliefs are organized. However, Allport as well as Allen and Spilka conceptualized religiosity as two types: one set of behaviors and ideas and an opposing set of behaviors and ideas. Both of these models were expanded even further when Daniel Batson added a third element to the theory.

Batson (Batson, 1976; Batson &

Schoenrade 1991; Batson & Ventis, 1982) suggested that there is a third component to religious orientation: religion as quest. This component involves an existential orientation toward religion. Individuals with a religion as quest orientation do not formulate clear-cut answers to life's difficult problems. Compared to persons with other religious orientations, individuals with a quest orientation are more comfortable with open-ended questions and complicated answers concerning the meaning of life and the inevitability of death.

The religion as quest theory adds to Allport's original model by allowing religious individuals the option to approach religion knowing that they may never know what is right and what is wrong. Religion as quest individuals have adopted "an open-ended, responsive dialogue with existential questions raised by the contradictions and tragedies of life" (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991, p. 431). Note that Batson neither introduced the quest component to replace the existing intrinsic or extrinsic orientations nor theorized that any one individual would possess only one of the orientations. Instead, Batson conceptualized intrinsic, extrinsic, and quest religiosity as dimensions independent from each other (Batson & Schoenrade, 1991).

A commonality between all of the aforementioned theories is the identification of religiosity as an "orientation." Psychologists later conceptualized religiosity as a "motivation" rather than an orientation. Gorsuch's (1994) theory about extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity is an example of this motivational approach.

Gorsuch conceptualized intrinsic and extrinsic as motivations rather than orientations so that religiosity could be distinguishable from beliefs and norms. Gorsuch revised Allport's definition of intrinsic religiosity to one solely based on motivation. "Intrinsic religious commitment is the motivation for experiencing and living one's religious faith for the sake of the faith itself. The person's religion is an end unto

itself, a goal pursued in the absence of external reinforcement" (Gorsuch, 1994, p. 13). Research (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1989) lead to the development of two sub-categories within extrinsic religiosity: Extrinsic personal (Ep) and Extrinsic social (Es). Ep refers to those people who make use of religion to satisfy personal needs such as lessening the tension in their lives; Es refers to those people who make use of religion to satisfy social needs (Fulton, Gorsuch, & Maynard, 1999).

Research suggests that there are different ways of approaching religion. Perhaps it is within these different approaches that some of the discrepancies between religious teachings and prejudicial attitudes can be accounted. Allport (1958) explained that the word prejudice originated from the Latin word *praejudicium*—"prae" meaning before and "judicium" meaning judgment. Allport defined prejudice as an incorrect judgment and overgeneralization that causes an unyielding dislike for a group of people or an individual who belongs to a specific group. Let us consider each part of the definition as Allport did.

The first part of Allport's definition of prejudice is that a judgment that is made on the basis of fact would not be viewed as prejudiced. Generalizations, however, are inferences made without enough information. It is virtually impossible for any one person to have met all of the members of any one group; therefore any generalizing belief or attitude toward a person would be considered prejudice. Believing that all young girls like pink would be an incorrect judgment unless of course you asked all of the young girls in existence and were then able to come to that conclusion.

The second part to Allport's definition of prejudice is the inflexible negative attitude. Sometimes we have misconceptions about people or groups of people. Allport gave the example of a boy who was confused and thought that people living in Minneapolis were called

monopolists. After learning that monopolists were bad people, the boy naturally disliked people who lived in Minneapolis. Once he learned that the two words were unrelated, his dislike for Minneapolis inhabitants ceased. Allport explained that this was an example of an erroneous judgment rather than a case of prejudice. According to Allport, prejudgments become prejudices only if views cannot be corrected after being exposed to new information.

The third element in Allport's definition is the idea that prejudice can be directed toward a group of people, a person associated with a group of people, or both. The generalization process mentioned earlier can cause these negative attitudes. Certain qualities, such as the color of our skin or the sound of our names, bring to mind membership in specific social groups. Once these specific qualities are recognized, group membership becomes a salient attribute and individual traits are ignored. For example, if a person experienced a negative interaction with someone who wore a red shirt, that person may associate negative experiences with red shirt wearers. The individual who had the negative experience forms the attitude "All red shirt wearers are bad" which thereby causes the positive qualities of this group of people to be ignored.

Prejudice is considered an attitude, and all attitudes are composed of three elements: the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components (Allport, 1958; Collins, 1970; Williams, 1947). The three components express the knowledge and understanding people have toward "attitude objects" (i.e., any person, idea, place, or thing). Exposure to attitude objects generates certain feelings and emotions. These feelings make up the affective portion of attitudes. Along with feelings, thoughts are also associated with attitude objects. The ideas and beliefs people generate about attitude objects make up the cognitive portion of attitudes. After people generate feelings and thoughts toward an attitude object, they are likely to

act in ways that are congruent with these emotions and beliefs. These actions that are directed toward attitude objects make up the last element in attitudes: the behavioral component.

People form attitudes about virtually everything including other people. People form attitudes about groups of people such as lesbians and gay males. Attitudes about lesbians and gay males can be described in terms of the three components mentioned earlier.

Researchers suggest that people's feelings toward lesbians and gay males include fear, dislike, and sometimes hatred (Beran, Claybaker, Dillon, & Haverkamp, 1992; Herek, 2000; Schellenberg, Hirt, & Sears, 1999; Weinberg, 1972). These feelings are what comprise the affective component of attitudes. Research on stereotypes toward lesbians and gay males has revealed the cognitive component of prejudicial attitudes. Stereotypes about lesbians include beliefs such as lesbians are more masculine than are heterosexual women (Herek, 1984; Kite & Deaux, 1987), lesbians hate all men (D'Augelli & Patterson, 1995), and lesbians are more dominant, competitive, strong, and aggressive than are heterosexual women (Gross, Green, Storck, & Vanyur, 1980). Stereotypes about gay men include beliefs such as all gay males are effeminate (Herek, 1984; Kite & Deaux, 1987), all gay men are child molesters (D'Augelli & Patterson, 1995), and gay men are generally more gentle, theatrical, and liberated than heterosexual men (Gross et al., 1980). Researchers have studied the different ways in which the behavioral component of prejudicial attitudes toward lesbians and gay males manifests itself (Crow, Fok, & Hartman, 1998; Franklin, 2000; Herek, 1993; Walters & Curran, 1996). Discrimination and physical violence toward gays and lesbians among a "non-criminal" college population was reported as ordinary behavior (Franklin, 2000). Lesbians and gay male students have been known to live in fear due to the frequent discrimination and harassment they face

(Herek, 1993). Homosexual couples have been harassed with derogatory comments, asked to leave the store, and if assisted, helped after waiting a longer period of time compared to heterosexual couples (Walters & Curran, 1996).

An individual's attitudes toward homosexuality can be shaped in part by the tenets of that person's faith. Some theologians cite the book of Leviticus as an indication that homosexuality is a sin. However, the degree to which each particular faith (e.g., Catholicism, Protestantism) adheres to this belief varies. The position of the Roman Catholic Church on homosexuality is very clear. Without exception, homosexuality is considered sinful. Other religions (e.g., Protestantism) have a less doctrinaire view of homosexuality (Melton, 1991).

Based on the ideas outlined above, it was hypothesized that intrinsically oriented individuals will be more prejudiced toward homosexuals than will extrinsically oriented individuals. It was also hypothesized that there will be less of a difference between intrinsically oriented people and extrinsically oriented people in the religious faiths that do not condemn homosexuality as strongly as the other faiths. In particular, intrinsic Catholics will have more negative attitudes toward homosexuals than will extrinsic Catholics. Intrinsic Protestants will have more negative attitudes than extrinsic Protestants. Catholics will show the greatest difference between extrinsically and intrinsically oriented individuals because the tenets of this faith hold stronger negative attitudes toward homosexuality than do the tenets of Protestant faith.

## **Method**

### Participants

Participants were 108 undergraduate students from the University of North Florida. A total of 59 females and 49 males participated in this study. In this sample, 76

percent were Caucasian. Most (72%) of the participants were between the ages of 18-23 years. There were slightly more Protestants (58%) than Catholics (42%) in this sample. Participants received extra credit toward their grade in an undergraduate psychology or business course as an incentive for participating in this study. Participants were treated in accordance with the "Ethical principles of psychologists and Code of conduct" (American Psychological Association, 1992).

### Design

The predictor variable for this study was religious orientation. The criterion variable for this study was attitudes toward homosexuals. The covariate for this study was knowledge of AIDS.

### Procedure

The purpose and procedures of the study were explained by the experimenter to the participants who were in groups of no more than eight people. The experimenter explained that there were no right or wrong answers to the questionnaires and that the participants' answers would be anonymous and confidential. Participants signed a written consent form and handed it in to the experimenter. Participants subsequently completed a series of questionnaires designed to measure their attitudes toward homosexuals and their religious orientation.

The first scale given to measure attitudes toward homosexuals was The Index of Homophobia (IHP) scale (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980). The IHP consists of 25 statements measured using a 5-point Likert scale with answers ranging from [1] *strongly disagree* to [5] *strongly agree*. Sample items include the following: "I would feel comfortable working closely with a male homosexual"; "If a member of my sex made a sexual advance toward me I would feel angry." Thirteen items were reversed scored. The following is an

example of a reversed scored item: "I would feel uncomfortable if I learned that my neighbor was homosexual." Higher scores indicated a more negative attitude toward homosexuals. Scores ranged from 0-125. The answers to the individual items were summed in order to get a total score.

Reliability was tested for the Index of Homophobia (IHP) (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980); a coefficient alpha of .90 was found. A standard error of measurement (SEM) was also found; the SEM was 4.75 (Hudson & Ricketts, 1980). Construct validity was also measured using several criterion variables including a measure of an individual's liberal versus conservative beliefs about human sexuality. The Sexual Attitude Scale (SAS) was used to measure these liberal and conservative beliefs. The correlation between the IHP and the SAS was .53,  $p < .01$ . Reliability and validity for the IHP scale was also measured in the present study. A correlation of .70,  $p < .05$ , was found for scores on the IHP and on Herek's (1987) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men Scale.

Attitudes toward homosexuality were also measured using the Attitudes Toward Lesbians (ATL) and Gay Men Scale (ATG) (Herek, 1987). The ATL and ATG scales each consist of ten items. A 5-point Likert scale was used with answers ranging from [1] *strongly disagree* to [5] *strongly agree*. Sample items include the following: "Lesbians just can't fit into our society"; "I would feel comfortable knowing that my son's male teacher was homosexual." Six of the items are reversed scored. The following is an example of a reversed scored item: "State laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behavior should be loosened." Higher scores indicate a more negative attitude toward homosexuals. Scores on the ATL and ATG scales were summed to measure an overall attitude toward homosexuals. Herek (1987) reported an internal consistency (alpha) coefficient of .86 for the ATL and .91 for the ATG.

Religious orientation was measured

using The Religious Orientation scale (ROS) (Allport & Ross, 1967). The scale includes a total of 20 items: ten items measuring intrinsic religiousness and ten items measuring extrinsic religiousness. A sample of an intrinsic item included the following: "I try hard to carry my religion over into all my other dealings in life." A sample of an extrinsic item included the following: "I pray chiefly because I have been taught to pray." The respondents' answers were scored on a 4-point scale with answers ranging in the frequency or the degree of agreement. Intrinsic religious orientation was measured by summing the scores to all of the intrinsic answers and calculating a median split. Extrinsic religious orientation was measured by summing the scores to all of the extrinsic answers and calculating a median split. Extrinsically oriented participants were identified by high scores on the extrinsic items and low scores on the intrinsic items. Intrinsically oriented participants were identified by high scores on the intrinsic items and low scores on the extrinsic items.

Herek (1987) used the ROS scale in his study on religious orientation and prejudice. Scores on the extrinsic and intrinsic scales were not significantly correlated ( $r = -.13$ ) which suggests that these orientations are independent from one another.

In addition to these questionnaires, information about the sex, age, race, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation of the participants was collected. Participants indicated the age that best described them out of five categories: [a] 18-23 years, [b] 24-29 years, [c] 30-34 years, [d] 35-39, [e] 40 or older. Participants indicated the race that best described them out of five categories: African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Other. Participants indicated the sexual orientation that best described them out of three categories: Heterosexual, Homosexual, and Bisexual. Participants indicated the religious affiliation that best described them out of five categories: Atheist or Agnostic,

Catholic, Jewish, Hindu/Buddhist/Muslim, and Protestant. If participants answered that they were Protestant, then they indicated the denomination that best described them out of five categories: Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist/Lutheran, and Other. Participants were asked to answer each question as honestly and as accurately as possible.

## Results

### Preliminary Analyses

A preliminary analysis was conducted to examine the internal consistency of each measure. A Cronbach alpha of .64 was obtained for the extrinsic subscale of the Allport and Ross Religious Orientation Scale (ROS). A Cronbach alpha of .90 was obtained for the intrinsic subscale of the ROS. A Cronbach alpha of .93 was obtained for the Hudson and Ricketts Attitudes toward Homosexuals scale. A Cronbach alpha of .93 was obtained for the Herek Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Males scale.

A negative correlation ( $r = -.81$ ,  $p < .01$ ) was found between scores on the Hudson and Ricketts Attitudes toward Homosexuals scale and scores on the Herek Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Males scale. High scores on the Herek scale indicate more prejudice toward homosexuals whereas high scores on the Hudson and Ricketts scale indicate less prejudice toward homosexuals. Because scores on both scales were highly correlated, only scores on the Herek Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Males scale were used in the main analysis.

### Main Analyses

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted using a 2 (intrinsic vs. extrinsic religious orientation) x 2 (Catholic vs. Protestant religious affiliation) design. In this analysis, only the data from those participants who scored as either intrinsic ( $n=36$ ) or extrinsic ( $n=29$ ) in their religious

orientation were used. Because no hypotheses were made for participants who scored as indiscriminately proreligious ( $n=30$ ) or indiscriminately antireligious ( $n=13$ ), data from these participants was not used in the analyses.

There was a main effect for religiosity,  $F(1, 61) = 4.14$ ,  $p < .05$ . Individuals with an intrinsic orientation ( $M = 60.33$ ,  $SD = 20.00$ ) were more prejudiced against homosexuals than were individuals with an extrinsic orientation ( $M = 44.55$ ,  $SD = 14.57$ ). A main effect for religious affiliation was also found,  $F(1, 61) = 16.85$ ,  $p < .01$ . Protestants ( $M = 59.75$ ,  $SD = 17.35$ ) were more prejudiced against homosexuals than were Roman Catholics ( $M = 39.76$ ,  $SD = 16.33$ ).

An interaction of religiosity and religious affiliation was also found,  $F(1, 61) = 4.75$ ,  $p < .05$ . More prejudice toward homosexuals was reported by Protestants with an intrinsic orientation ( $M = 66.32$ ,  $SD = 15.19$ ) than by Protestants with an extrinsic orientation ( $M = 48.25$ ,  $SD = 15.02$ ),  $F(1, 42) = 14.52$ ,  $p < .01$ . There was no difference in the amount of prejudice toward homosexuals reported by Catholics with an intrinsic orientation ( $M = 39.37$ ,  $SD = 21.57$ ) and Catholics with an extrinsic orientation ( $M = 40.00$ ,  $SD = 13.15$ ),  $F < 1.00$ .

## Discussion

The researcher made three hypotheses. First, it was hypothesized that intrinsically oriented individuals would be more prejudiced toward homosexuals than would extrinsically oriented individuals. Second, it was hypothesized that overall Catholics would be more prejudiced toward homosexuals than would Protestants. Third, it was hypothesized that there would be an interaction between religious orientation (i.e., intrinsic versus extrinsic) and religious affiliation (i.e., Catholic versus Protestant) such that intrinsic Catholics would be more prejudiced toward homosexuals than intrinsic Protestants, extrinsic Catholics, and

extrinsic Protestants. According to research, Catholics have a more doctrinaire view of homosexuality than Protestants (Melton, 1991) and intrinsically oriented individuals consider the tenets of their faith as a *guide* inspiring their everyday actions and decisions whereas extrinsically oriented individuals use their religion to satisfy *social* needs (Allport, 1966).

The first hypothesis was supported by the results. Intrinsically oriented people were more prejudiced toward homosexuals than were extrinsically oriented people. In general, an intrinsic religious orientation does influence people's attitudes and beliefs about homosexuality. These results were consistent with previous research (Batson & Burris, 1994; Fisher, Derison, Polley, Cadman, & Johnston 1994; Hunsberger, 1995).

The second hypothesis was not supported by the results. Protestants were more prejudiced toward homosexuals than were Roman Catholics. The sample may have contained a larger number of fundamental Protestants than fundamental Catholics. Fundamentalism may account, in part, for the Protestants' prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuality. People who score high on scales of fundamentalism tend to be authoritarian and *conservative* in their political and economical attitudes (Putney & Middleton, 1961). Perhaps these conservative beliefs include more negative attitudes toward homosexuals than do non-fundamentalists' attitudes toward homosexuals.

The third hypothesis was not supported. The predicted interaction between religious orientation and religious affiliation was statistically significant. However, the pattern of the means was not in the direction predicted. Intrinsically oriented Protestants were more prejudiced toward homosexuals than were intrinsically oriented Catholics. In fact, intrinsically oriented Protestants held the most negative attitudes toward homosexuals than any other group measured (i.e., extrinsically oriented Protestants, extrinsically oriented Catholics).

The reason the results did not support the third hypothesis may be due to the nature of the sample. Intrinsically oriented people consider their religion "as an end in itself." Intrinsically oriented individuals internalize the tenets of their faith more so than extrinsically oriented people (Allport, 1966). With Allport's theory on intrinsic religiosity in mind, recall the explanation given earlier regarding fundamentalism. The Protestant sample may have included more fundamentalists than did the Catholic sample. Putney and Middleton (1961) reported that people who scored high on the fundamentalism scale were more likely to be authoritarian and more conservative in their political and economic beliefs than non-fundamentalists. Perhaps the conservative beliefs of fundamentalists include conservative attitudes toward social groups including homosexuals. If the sample did in fact contain a greater number of fundamental Protestants than Catholics, it would then seem plausible that intrinsically oriented fundamentalists would hold the most prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuals.

There are a number of reasonable alternative explanations as to why the results did not generally support the second and third hypotheses. Among these alternative explanations, three specific areas were focused on. These areas include the nature of the sample, the nature of the religiosity scale that was used, and the nature of survey used to collect the data.

In general, the more education people receive, the more positive their attitudes toward homosexuals become (Schellenberg, Hirt, & Sears, 1999). Increased levels of education not only teach students to understand prejudicial beliefs and reject them but also to make their own judgments about prejudices toward social groups (Schellenberg et al., 1999). The sample of Protestants in the present study may have contained a larger number of students who have not completed the same education level as did the Catholic sample. Future

research evaluating prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuals as a function of religiosity should also measure the participants' level of education to determine if education is in fact a predictor of prejudicial attitudes.

In addition to the nature of the sample, the nature of the religiosity scale that was used may also account for the discrepancies between the second and third hypotheses and the results. Allport's Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) was used to measure the religious orientation of the participants. In the present study, the extrinsic scale of the ROS had lower internal consistency scores than did the intrinsic scale of the ROS. It is possible that the differences in reliability between the intrinsic and extrinsic measures of religiosity could have contributed to the discrepancies found between the hypotheses and the results.

The nature of the survey used to collect the data may have also contributed to the rejection of the second and third hypotheses. Participants were asked to fill out several questionnaires measuring their attitudes toward homosexuals and religious beliefs. The nature of these topics may have been personal and sensitive for some of the participants. Although the experimenter assured the participants that their answers would remain completely confidential and anonymous, some participants may not have felt comfortable answering the questions as honestly and as accurately as possible. Some participants may not have wanted to appear prejudiced toward homosexuals despite assured confidentiality and anonymity. Participants may have answered in a socially desirable manner in order to avoid being viewed as prejudiced by the experimenter or other participants. The experimenter's assurance of confidentiality should have alleviated any doubts that their answers would be connected to them. Participants should therefore not be concerned about being viewed negatively by the experimenter.

Overall, religious orientation does serve as a valid predictor of prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuality. There are conflicting reports of religious affiliation as a predictor of prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuality. Because religious beliefs do influence the attitudes and opinions people have toward certain social groups, it is important for social psychologists to continue studying these phenomena in order to identify the ways religious beliefs are related to prejudicial attitudes toward homosexuals. The likelihood that *all* prejudicial attitudes toward any social group be eliminated is not only an unreasonable goal but it is also unlikely. However, understanding the roots of prejudicial attitudes will hopefully decrease the amount of discrimination that is apparent in society today.

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